GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:911
ANSWERED ON:28.04.2016
Pension to Widows
Sreeramulu Shri B.;Tharoor Dr. Shashi

Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware about the dismal living conditions of Vrindavan widows, if so, the details thereof;

(b) the details of the implementation of the Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme (IGNWPS) including the total number of beneficiaries who have received pension in the last three years, State/UTwise;

(c) whether the Government is likely to implement the recommendations of the Task Force and increase the quantum of pension from the current INR 200 per month, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) whether the Government proposes to extend the scheme to cover widows below the age of 40 years and "half-widows or women whose husbands are missing or have disappeared but are not confirmed dead, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT
(SHRI SUDARSHAN BHAGAT)

(a): The Government is aware about the dismal living conditions of Vrindavan widows. Ministry of Women & Child Development has informed that a Scheme "Swadhar" was launched by the Ministry of Women & Child Development during the year 2001-02 for the benefit of women in difficult circumstances. Another scheme, namely " Short Stay Home" which is similar in nature as Swadhar scheme is being implemented through Central Social Welfare Board since 1969. The Swadhar and Short Stay Homes Schemes have now been merged and revised as " Swadhar Greh" w.e.f. 1-1-2016. From 1-1-2016 funds are to be channelized to Implementing agencies through State Governments. Swadhar Greh Scheme targets the women victims of unfortunate circumstances who are in need on institutional support for rehabilitation so that they could lead their life with dignity. The scheme envisages providing shelter, food, clothing and health as well as economic and social security for the women victims of difficult circumstances. It is pertinent to mention that this scheme caters to all women who are in difficult circumstances including widows.

There are presently 5 Swadhar Homes at Vrindavan with 515 inmates.Apart from these Swadhar homes, a Home, for the widows, at Sunrakh Bangar, Vrindavan, with capacity of 1000 inmates, is now being constructed by Central Government through NBCC. The State of Uttar Pradesh has informed that the Uttar Pradesh Mahila Kalyan Nigam is operating the Mahila Ashrams in Vrindavan (Mathura) for destitute widows. Identification of beneficiaries, sanction and disbursement of benefit under the schemes of NSAP is done by the State/UTs.

(b): Under Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme (IGNWPS), pension / Central assistance of Rs. 300/- per month is provided to widows in the age-group of 40-79 years and belonging to the below poverty line(BPL) household as per the criteria prescribed by Government of India. After attaining the age of 80 years, the beneficiary would be shifted to Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS) for getting pension of Rs. 500/- per month. States/UTs have been requested to contribute at least an equal amount under IGNWPS. The State /UT wise details of widows covered during last three years are at Annexure.

(c) & (d): The Central assistance under IGNWPS was increased from Rs.200/- to Rs. 300/- per month on 08th November 2012.At, present the Government is not likely to implement the recommendations of the Task Force and extend the scheme to cover widows below the age of 40 years and 'half widows' or women whose husbands are missing or have disappeared but are not confirmed dead.

Keeping in view the scarce Government resources and present budgetary allocation the financial assistance under the schemes of NSAP is provided only to the most vulnerable i.e. persons belonging to Below Poverty Line(BPL) household

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